

REMARKS

In response to the final Office Action of August 6, 2009, applicants request that all claims be allowed in view of the following remarks. Claims 15-23, 25-39, 41, 42, 44-46, 48, and 50-53 are pending in the application, of which claims 15, 23, 31, 45, and 52 are independent.

Interview Summary

Applicants thank Examiner Pillai for the telephone interview conducted with applicants' representative, Andrew Foy, on December 16, 2009. During the interview, applicants' representative Andrew Foy and Examiner Pillai discussed the final Office Action of August 6, 2009 and the remarks presented in applicants' Reply of May 5, 2009. No agreement was reached.

Nevertheless, applicants continue to believe that the outstanding rejection should be withdrawn in view of the remarks presented in applicants' Reply of May 5, 2009 and, therefore, incorporate those remarks into the present Reply. In addition, in the remarks below, applicants set forth additional reasons for why the outstanding rejection should be withdrawn.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 15-23, 25-39, 41, 42, 44-46, 48, and 50-53 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over U.S. Patent No. 7,275,215 (Werndorfer) in view of U.S. Patent No. 7,185,059 (Daniell).

Claims 15-22, 29, 30, and 50

Independent claim 15 recites a computer-implemented method for enabling electronic communications by a user having multiple accounts hosted by a single communications service provider that represents each of the multiple accounts of the user hosted by the communications service provider with a corresponding screen name. Among other features, the method includes displaying a single graphical user interface configured to accommodate multiple lists of other screen names, each of which corresponds to a different account of the user hosted by the single

communications service provider and contiguously lists a set of screen names that represent *other accounts that are hosted by the single communications service provider* and that correspond to other users with whom the user communicates using the account to which the list corresponds.

The combination of Werndorfer and Daniell fails to render independent claim 15 obvious at least because the combination of Werndorfer and Daniell does not describe or suggest displaying a single graphical user interface configured to accommodate multiple lists of other screen names, each of which corresponds to a different account of the user hosted by the single communications service provider and contiguously lists a set of screen names that represent *other accounts that are hosted by the single communications service provider*, as recited in independent claim 15.

Werndorfer discloses a unified instant messaging client platform that is interoperable with multiple, normally incompatible instant messaging service providers. *See, e.g.*, Werndorfer at col. 3, lines 38-62. As described by Werndorfer, the unified instant messaging client platform provides an instant messaging graphical user interface that enables a user to compose and send instant messages using different accounts provided by the different, normally incompatible instant messaging service providers. *See, e.g.*, Werndorfer at col. 3, line 63 to col. 6, line 53.

FIG. 3 of Werndorfer, which is reproduced below for reference, provides an illustration of Werndorfer's instant messaging graphical user interface.

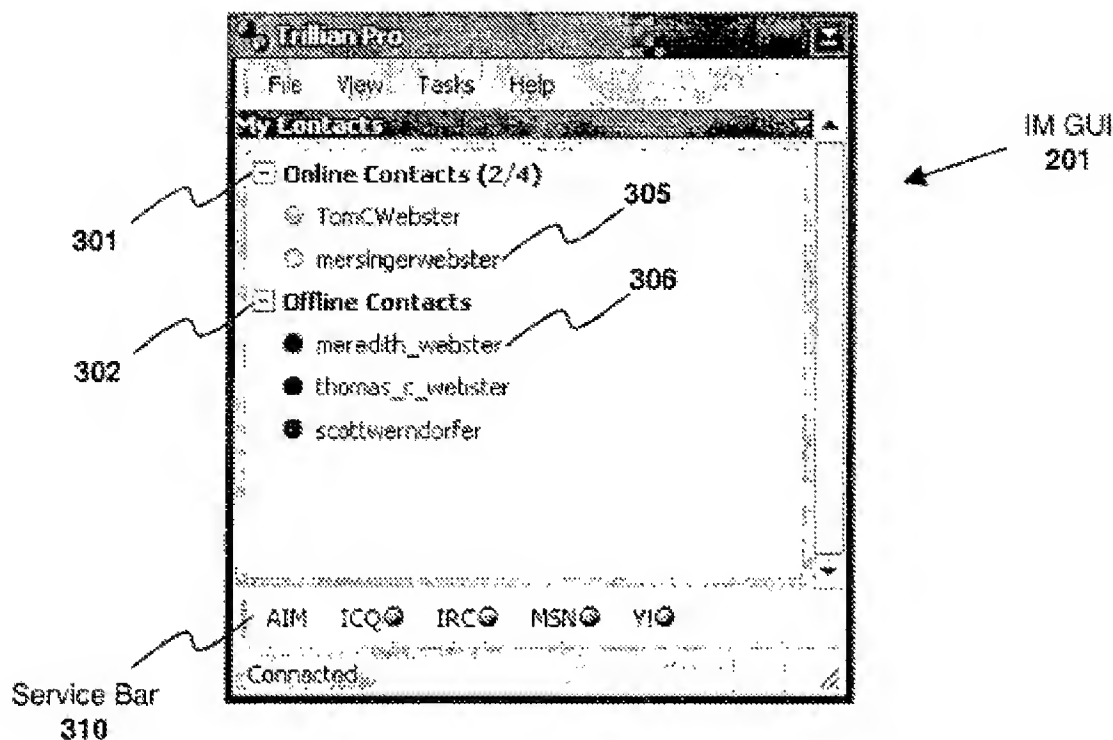


Fig. 3

FIG. 3 of Werndorfer.

As illustrated in FIG. 3, Werndorfer's instant messaging graphical user interface includes a single instant messaging contacts list that has been compiled for a user of Werndorfer's system by combining the user's instant messaging contacts lists from different, normally incompatible instant messaging service providers (i.e., AIM, ICQ, IRC, MSN, and Yahoo!) into a single instant messaging contacts list. Individual icons displayed adjacent to the screen names in the instant messaging contacts list are used to identify the instant messaging contacts lists from which the different screen names have been drawn. For example, one icon is used to identify screen names drawn from the user's AIM instant messaging contacts list and a different icon is used to identify screen names drawn from the user's ICQ instant messaging contacts list.

As the Office Action acknowledges, Werndorfer fails to describe or suggest a single graphical user interface configured to accommodate multiple lists of other screen names. *See, e.g.,* final Office Action of August 6, 2009 at page 4, lines 2-12. As such, it follows that Werndorfer also fails to describe or suggest displaying a single graphical user interface configured to accommodate multiple lists of other screen names, each of which corresponds to a different account of the user hosted by the single communications service provider and contiguously lists a set of screen names that represent *other accounts that are hosted by the single communications service provider*, as recited in independent claim 15.

Daniell describes a graphical user interface that is similar to Werndorfer in that it enables a user to access different instant messaging accounts provided by different, normally incompatible instant messaging providers. *See, e.g.,* Daniell at Abstract; col. 18, lines 3-19; and FIG. 14. FIG. 14 of Daniell, which is reproduced below for reference, provides an illustration of Daniell's instant messaging graphical user interface:

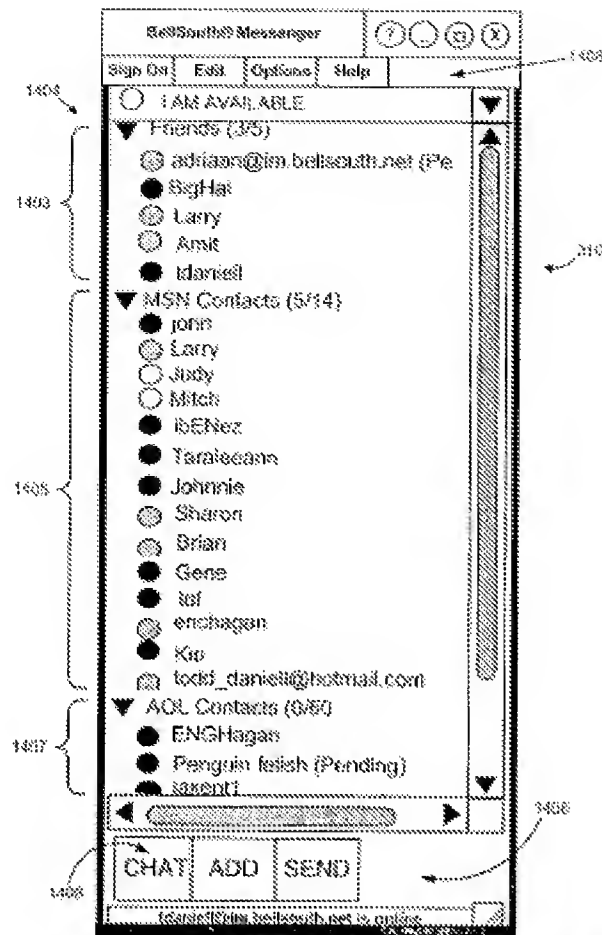


FIG. 14

FIG. 14 of Daniell.

As illustrated in FIG. 14, Daniell's instant messaging graphical user interface includes a single instant messaging contacts list that has been compiled for a user of Daniell's system by combining the user's instant messaging contacts lists from different, normally incompatible instant messaging service providers (i.e., BellSouth, MSN, and AOL) into a single instant messaging contacts list. Specifically, FIG. 14 illustrates a list of the user's contacts that is subdivided into a BellSouth contacts group (listing contacts whose IM service is provided by BellSouth), an MSN contacts group (listing contacts whose IM service is provided by MSN), and an AOL contacts group (listing contacts whose IM service is provided by AOL). Notably, each group of contacts represented in FIG. 14 corresponds to contacts whose IM service is provided by a different service provider. There are no two groups of contacts corresponding to contacts

whose IM service is provided by the same service provider. As such, Daniell does not describe or suggest displaying a single graphical user interface configured to accommodate multiple lists of other screen names, each of which corresponds to a different account of the user hosted by the single communications service provider and contiguously lists a set of screen names that represent *other accounts that are hosted by the single communications service provider*, as recited in independent claim 15.

Accordingly, for at least the foregoing reasons, applicants request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of independent claim 15 and its dependent claims, claims 16-22, 29, 30, and 50.

Claims 23 and 25-28

Independent claim 23 recites a graphical user interface for facilitating communications by a user having multiple accounts hosted by a single instant messaging service provider that represents each of the multiple accounts of the user hosted by the instant messaging service provider with a corresponding screen name. As recited in independent claim 23, the graphical user interface includes one or more window interfaces that are structured and arranged to enable, among other features, a display portion configured to make perceivable two or more instant messaging contact lists, wherein each instant messaging contacts list is associated with one of the multiple accounts of the user, is separated from the other instant messaging contacts lists, and includes a contiguous listing of other screen names, *each of the other screen names representing another account that is hosted by the single instant messaging service provider*.

For reasons that are analogous to those discussed above in connection with independent claim 15, applicants submit that Werndorfer and Daniell do not describe or suggest such a graphical user interface. Accordingly, for at least this reason, applicants request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of independent claim 23 and its dependent claims, claims 25-28.

Claims 31-39, 41, 42, 44, and 51

Independent claim 31 recites a computer-implemented method for linking multiple accounts of a user hosted by a single communications service provider that represents each of the accounts of the user with a corresponding screen name that includes, among other features,

maintaining, for a user who has multiple accounts that are hosted by the single communications service provider, a first contacts list that corresponds to a first account of the user and that includes *screen names that each represent another account hosted by the single communications service provider*, and maintaining, for the user, a second contacts list that corresponds to a second account of the user and that includes *additional screen names that each represent an additional account hosted by the single communications service provider*.

For reasons that are analogous to those discussed above in connection with independent claim 15, applicants submit that Werndorfer and Daniell do not describe or suggest this feature of independent claim 31. Accordingly, for at least this reason, applicants request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of independent claim 31 and its dependent claims, claims 32-39, 41, 42, 44, and 51.

Claims 45, 46, and 48

Independent claim 45 recites a computer-implemented method for enabling instant messaging by a user who has at least two different instant messaging accounts hosted by a single instant messaging service provider that represents the two different instant messaging accounts with corresponding screen names. As recited in independent claim 45, the method includes displaying, to a user who has both a first instant messaging account and a second instant messaging account that are hosted by a single instant messaging service provider, a single instant messaging graphical user interface that includes a first instant messaging contacts list that corresponds to the first instant messaging account of the user and that includes a first contiguous listing of *instant messaging screen names that each represent an instant messaging account also hosted by the single instant messaging service provider*, and a second instant messaging contacts list that corresponds to the second instant messaging account of the user and that includes a second contiguous listing of *instant messaging screen names that each represent an instant messaging account also hosted by the single instant messaging service provider*.

For reasons that are analogous to those discussed above in connection with independent claim 15, applicants submit that Werndorfer and Daniell do not describe or suggest this feature of independent claim 45. Accordingly, applicants request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of independent claim 45 and its dependent claims, claims 46 and 48.

Claims 52 and 53

Independent claim 52 recites a computer-implemented method that includes, among other features, displaying a single graphical user interface that includes a first contiguous listing of multiple *messaging screen names that each represent an electronic messaging account hosted by a particular electronic messaging service provider*, and a second contiguous listing of *multiple messaging screen names that each represent another electronic messaging account also hosted by the particular electronic messaging service provider*.

For reasons that are analogous to those discussed above in connection with independent claim 15, applicants submit that Werndorfer and Daniell do not describe or suggest this feature of independent claim 52. Accordingly, applicants request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of independent claim 52 and its dependent claim, claim 53.

Conclusion

Applicants submit that all claims are in condition for allowance.

It is believed that all of the pending issues have been addressed. However, the absence of a reply to a specific rejection, issue or comment does not signify agreement with or concession of that rejection, issue or comment. In addition, because the arguments made above may not be exhaustive, there may be reasons for patentability of any or all pending claims (or other claims) that have not been expressed. Finally, nothing in this reply should be construed as an intent to concede any issue with regard to any claim, except as specifically stated in this reply, and the amendment of any claim does not necessarily signify concession of unpatentability of the claim prior to its amendment.

No fees are believed due in connection with the filing of this Reply. In the event that any charges or credits are due in connection with the filing of this Reply or otherwise, please apply such charges or credits to Deposit Account 06-1050.

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Respectfully submitted,

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